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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of

Pierre GIROD

Application No.: 09/980,863

Filed: December 7, 2001

For: COMPUTER-ASSISTED
TICKETING SYSTEM WITH
MULTIPLE OPERATORS

Group Art Unit: 2876

Examiner: D. St. Cyr

Confirmation No.: 3216

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

In response to the Office Action dated December 19, 2003, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the claims. Applicant would like to express his appreciation for the courteous interview conducted by Examiner St. Cyr with Applicant's undersigned representative. During the course of the interview, the elements of claim 1 were discussed relative to the disclosure of the Kiyooki reference, as summarized below. As a result of this discussion, the Examiner agreed that the claim is patentably distinguishable from the reference.

Claims 1, 2, 6-8, 10, 11 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103, on the grounds that they were considered to be anticipated by the Kiyooki reference (EP 0169278). Claims 3-5, 12-15 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103, on the basis of the Kiyooki reference. Claim 9 was identified as containing allowable subject matter, which Applicant notes with appreciation.

As discussed during the above-noted interview, claim 1 recites a multi-operator ticketing system having two principal elements, namely a first means and a consulate means. The rejection states that the claimed first means corresponds to the sorting device depicted in Figures 2-8 of the reference. The rejection also states that the claimed consulate means corresponds to the means for reading information at one of the bus stations a'', b'' or c'' from a ticket purchased at the train station X, e.g. the magnetic reader mechanism 31.

Claim 1 recites that the first means has three attributes, namely:

- a) it is specific to a first operator;
- b) it acquires information from a ticket issued by the first operator,
and
- c) it authorizes a service according to the acquired information.

Since the sorting devices, i.e. the "first means" of the reference, are located at the offices 64, 65, 66 of the bus companies A, B, C, to be consistent with the first claimed attribute a "first operator" must be one of the bus companies, as the sorting devices are specific to the respective bus companies.

A ticket issued by a first operator, i.e. one of the bus companies, is the ticket 56. See page 15, lines 9-14 of the reference. In contrast, a ticket 55 is issued by the train company, and therefore it is not a ticket issued by a first operator. Attribute (b) of the claim requires that the first means, i.e. the sorting device, acquire information from a ticket issued by the first operator. The reference does not disclose that the sorting device acquires information from the tickets 56. Rather, its function is to separate tickets 55 issued by the train company from tickets 56 issued by the bus company. The bus company tickets 56 are then discharged directly to a shredder.

See page 17, line 25 to page 18, line 5. There is no reading of information from these tickets.

Furthermore, even if it could be argued that the sorter “acquires” information from the tickets 56 in order to separate them from the tickets 55, there is no disclosure that the sorting device authorizes a service according to such acquired information. In the system of the reference, the service given to the passengers, namely a bus ride, has already been provided by the time the tickets reach the sorting device. Consequently, the sorting device does not function to *authorize* a service based upon information acquired from the ticket, as required by attribute (c) of claim 1.

With respect to the consulate means, claim 1 recites two attributes, namely:

- d) it receives information from a ticket issued by another operator, e.g. the train company, and
- e) it transmits, to the first means, authorization to render said service, e.g. a bus ride, according to the information obtained.

The reference discloses that the magnetic reader mechanism 31 receives information from a ticket issued by the train company, i.e. the “other” operator. However, there is no disclosure that the magnetic reader mechanism transmits authorization to render said service, namely a bus ride, to the first means, i.e. the sorting device. Rather, the information obtained by the magnetic reader is transmitted to the central office 64, 65 or 66 of the respective bus company, in order to compute a bill that is forwarded to the train company. See page 18, lines 16-27. There is no transmission of authorization to render a service, based on the

information obtained from the tickets 56. As noted previously, the service has already been rendered by the time the tickets reach the magnetic reader.

For at least the foregoing reasons, therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the Kiyoaki reference does not anticipate the subject matter of claim 1. In addition, further distinguishing features of the invention are set forth in dependent claims 2-17. In light of the fundamental nature of the distinctions pointed out above, however, a detailed discussion of these additional distinctions is not believed to be necessary at this time.

As noted previously, at the conclusion of the interview, the Examiner agreed that the subject matter of the claim was not disclosed in the reference. He indicated that a further search would be conducted, to determine whether other pertinent art existed. If other prior art which is more relevant than the Kiyoaki reference cannot be located, Applicant respectfully submits that the application is in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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